ECS Special Education Funding

A Handbook for School Authorities for the 2007/2008 School Year

Alberta
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ECS Special Education Funding: A Handbook for School Authorities for the 2007/2008 School Year

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The Alberta Education website at: www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds

Alberta Education
Special Programs Branch
8th Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard
10044 – 108 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 5E6
Telephone: (780) 422–6326 or toll-free in Alberta by dialing 310–0000
Fax: (780) 422–2039

This document is intended for:

Teachers	✓
Administrators	✓

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Introduction

Notes about terms used in this handbook

Throughout this handbook, *parent* refers to parent(s) or guardian(s).

Early childhood services (ECS) program means an education program offered by a school authority or, with the approval of the Minister, a person, to a child who is younger than 6 years of age as of September 1. The last year of an ECS program prior to Grade 1 is considered the kindergarten year.

School authority means public and separate school boards, including francophone regional authorities, private ECS operators, accredited-funded private schools approved by Alberta Education to provide an ECS program, and charter schools that apply for ECS special education funding.

In all cases, the school authority must be approved by Alberta Education to provide an ECS program, and is then referred to as an *ECS operator*.

Approved Operator Status

Only those ECS operators meeting all terms and conditions for approved status are eligible to receive funds to provide educational programming for children with special education needs. For information on seeking approved ECS operator status, please contact one of Alberta Education's Field Services staff at:

- (780) 427–2952 in Edmonton
- (403) 297–6353 in Calgary
- Toll free in Alberta by dialing 310–0000.

Age of Eligibility

The following table outlines the age of eligibility for funding for all types of ECS programming.

Age of Eligibility for Funding of ECS Children

Eligibility type	Minimum age of child on September 1 of the program year	Maximum years of funding
Severe disability/delay	2 years, 6 months	3
Mild to moderate disability/delay	3 years, 6 months	2
Gifted and talented	3 years, 6 months	2
Regular kindergarten	4 years, 6 months	1
Developmentally immature	5 years, 6 months	2

Note

The minimum age for school entry varies among school jurisdictions. ECS children who meet the age requirement listed on the previous page are eligible for ECS Base Instruction funding if registered on or before September 30. Care should be taken to ensure that school entry into Grade 1 will follow the final year of eligibility for ECS funding. For more information on ECS Base Instruction Funding, see p. 19.

Program Unit Funding (PUF) is available to school authorities that provide educational programming for children with severe disabilities/delays from a minimum age of 2 years, 6 months to a maximum age of less than 6 years on September 1. This funding is provided for a maximum of three years. For more information on PUF, see p. 4.

Based on the age of the child, the school authority and the child's parent(s) may decide collaboratively to delay entry into an ECS educational program for one year. This ensures the school authority has access to the maximum ECS funding that includes the year prior to Grade 1.

Local ECS Special Education Needs Policies

It is expected that school authorities will develop ECS policies regarding the provision of programming for children with special education needs. These policies should be consistent with those outlined in *Early Childhood Services Policy 1.1.3*, which is included in the current Alberta Education *Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual*, available at www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationguide/pol-plan/polregs/toc.asp. ECS policies will include the monitoring and evaluation of PUF programming. See Appendix A for information on developing local policies.

ECS Context

ECS operators should adhere to the principles outlined in Alberta Education's *Kindergarten Program Statement (Revised September 2005)*, available at www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/kinder.asp, when programming for children.

1. Young children learn best when programming meets their developmental needs.
2. Young children develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for later learning.
3. Young children with special education needs, through early intervention strategies, develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for later learning.
4. Young children build a common set of experiences through interaction with others.
5. Parents have the opportunity for meaningful involvement in the education of their young children.
6. Coordinated community services meet the needs of young children and their families.

The principles in the *Kindergarten Program Statement (Revised September 2005)* set the context for programming for all children. However, children with special education needs require accommodations and adaptations to programming.

ECS Policy

In addition, as required by the *Early Childhood Services Policy 1.1.3* (April 29, 2002), an approved ECS operator shall:

- accept and organize programming for all children with special education needs who meet eligibility criteria, and for whom programming is requested
- develop policy and procedures addressing the special education needs component of the ECS program consistent with Alberta Education regulations
- consult with and inform parents of all program placement decisions and of all program planning, implementation and evaluation activities directly involving their child
- develop, implement and regularly review an individualized program plan (IPP) for each child with mild, moderate or severe disabilities/delays and for each child who is gifted and talented.

Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education

Children with special education needs require additional supports, accommodations and adaptations to general ECS programming. *Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education* outlines for school authorities and parents the standards for educational programming and services for children with special education needs who are eligible under *Early Childhood Services Policy 1.1.3*. It describes how school authorities meet these individual needs within a developmentally appropriate program as outlined by the broad principles in the *Kindergarten Program Statement (Revised September 2005)*.

The standards promote consistent, quality educational practices within Alberta, so that, irrespective of location, ECS children with special education needs can access appropriate programming and services in a manner that serves the best interests of the child. These standards support Alberta Education's goal to ensure the learning system meets the needs of all learners and society.

The standards are organized into the following areas:

- Access
- Appropriateness
- Accountability
- Appeals

Program Unit Funding

Program Unit Funding (PUF) is provided to school authorities for ECS children with severe disabilities/delays who require additional support beyond that offered in a regular ECS program. Funding is provided for individualized programming that meets the educational needs of children with severe disabilities/delays who are at least 2 years, 6 months of age and less than 6 years of age on September 1. PUF may be paid for a maximum of three years for each eligible child.

To receive PUF, a school authority must provide an appropriate educational program for children who meet the criteria for at least one of the severe disability/delay codes described in *Special Education Coding Criteria 2007/2008* (available at www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds). This funding is in addition to the Base Instruction funding provided for eligible ECS children with severe disabilities/delays who were registered as of September 30.

- Payment of funding is based on approval of the PUF application.
- An IPP must be developed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated for each child.
- The child's parent(s) must be involved in the IPP process.
- The PUF application should be submitted as early as possible in the school year.
- The deadline for applications is December 21, 2007.
- Revisions after the deadline will be accepted.
- Applications for eligible children who are registered or identified after December 21, 2007, will be accepted until April 1, 2008.

School authorities that access PUF must develop a budget that takes into consideration the individual programming needs of each eligible child in the school authority.

New

All school authorities will access PUF through the new model, which was piloted with selected school authorities beginning in the 2004/2005 school year.

Any questions regarding PUF should be directed to Alberta Education Special Programs Branch at (780) 422–6326 (toll free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000).

Basic Requirements for Program Unit Funding

Overview

Eligibility to receive funding for a child with a severe disability/delay is based on the following:

- approved operator status
- local ECS special education needs policy
- age of child
- educational impact of the disability/delay in the ECS environment
- functioning level of child
- application for Program Unit Funding.

Responsibility for Eligibility

The ECS operator is required to make decisions regarding the severity of the disability/delay based on assessment from qualified professionals. The criteria for severe disabilities/delays are available in *Special Education Coding Criteria 2007/2008*.

Functioning Level of Child

Note

Eligibility criteria requires diagnosis of a severe disability/delay, but it is the extent to which the child can function in the ECS program that is most important in determining eligibility and the child's programming needs. School authorities must have all children approved for PUF by Special Programs Branch. School authorities may also contact Special Programs Branch for advice regarding eligibility for mild/moderate and/or gifted and talented funding.

PUF is designed to provide additional and educationally relevant supports and services that would not normally be available in the ECS classroom. In providing the most enabling educational environment possible, ECS operators are encouraged to consider models other than direct one-on-one assistance, especially for large blocks of time, including:

- focused intervention provided in a small group
- strategic use of educational assistant time
- peer-model instruction
- environmental supports (e.g., visual schedules, well-established routines, warnings of transition, visual cues, adapted furniture, use of physical boundaries to define space)
- embedding IPP goals in ongoing routines and activities.

Application for Program Unit Funding

To receive Program Unit Funding, school authorities must submit a completed PUF application. The next section of this handbook contains detailed information on completing the application.

Completion of Program Unit Funding Application

The following information is provided to assist school authorities in completing a PUF application. A private ECS operator or private school with 10 or fewer PUF children may use either the paper application form or the web-based Program Unit Funding System (PUFS) to complete and submit their PUF application. All other school authorities must use PUFS. For additional information on PUFS, contact School Finance at (780) 427-2055 or toll-free at 310-0000.

Page 1: Declaration

The contact person named on the application form should be the person most familiar with the details of the application. The person who must review and submit the application using PUFS, or sign the paper application on page 1, is the secretary-treasurer. With his or her signature or PUFS submission, the secretary-treasurer declares that the following conditions have been met.

Parental Involvement

- Parents are an integral part of the planning and decision-making process. They must be involved in and informed of all aspects of their child's program. Specifically, they must be fully aware that their child has been identified with a severe disability/delay and an IPP is in place.
- Communication with parents may include one-on-one discussions, small group meetings, extended group meetings or meetings with specialists.

Screening and Assessment

- Assessment provided by a qualified professional is required and must identify the severe disability/delay of the child according to the criteria (see *Special Education Coding Criteria 2007/2008*). This assessment must reflect the current functioning level of the child to confirm that the child continues to meet eligibility criteria. For the application to be processed, the school authority must submit actual assessment report(s). Applications that are submitted without assessment information will not be processed.

Individualized Program Plan

- The ECS operator must develop an IPP that meets the requirements outlined in *Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education*. Goals should be consistent with the child's assessed area of need. Programming should be based on the principles from the *Kindergarten Program Statement (Revised September 2005)*, which are reprinted on page 2 of this handbook.

Teacher-Directed Program

- It is essential that a certificated teacher be directly involved in all aspects of the child's program. The child's program activities should be integrated into the regular classroom as much as possible. Support from specialists and other appropriate personnel can assist in the delivery of the program.
- When a designated special education ECS program is providing on-site centre-based programming, a certificated teacher must be teaching in the classroom.

- The certificated-teacher-to-child ratio must allow the certificated teacher to be actively involved in and directing the program; including planning, overseeing delivery, assessment and communication with the child's parent. The certificated teacher is at the child's placement on a regular basis and while at the play school/daycare is engaging in some or all of the following activities:
  - consulting with the teacher assistant and the play school director
  - observing the child and the interaction between the child and the teacher assistant and/or the child and other children in the program
  - engaging in direct teaching/assessment of the child
  - providing the teacher assistant/play school director with strategies or next steps
  - coaching the teacher assistant in use of "theme tubs" or other ongoing activities that support the child's learning.

Specialized Support Services

- Appropriate print resources and professional development opportunities, such as special education conferences, in-service activities and support groups, should be made available to staff and parents.
- Each child should be provided with the services necessary to meet his or her programming needs. The model of service delivery should be consistent with the needs of the child, best practice, and the availability of resources. Services should be delivered in the most natural setting possible. The teacher is the coordinator of these services.

Pages 2 and 3: Criteria for Determining Eligibility

See *Special Education Coding Criteria 2007/2008* for special education coding criteria for severe disabilities/delays.

Page 4: Details of Children in Program Unit(s)

Alberta Student Number (ASN)

Applications cannot be submitted to Alberta Education without ASNs. If you are registering children who may have been with another operator previously, call Special Programs Branch to verify child's ASN.

Name of Child

Ensure the child's name appearing on details page is:

- spelled correctly
- not a nickname
- consistent with child's name registered in SIS on September 30.

Program Unit and Clustering

A program unit refers to a single child or to children sharing resources and programming. Two or more children within a unit are referred to as a cluster.

Age

PUFS calculates correct age based on the date of birth entered. For paper applications, this column is for Alberta Education use only.

Location of Child's Program (including AM or PM)
- List location(s) of centre-based programming.
- Indicate time frame, e.g., Mon–Fri, 9:00–11:30 AM.

R or N
Renewal or an application for a child who is **N**ew to PUF.

Assessed Primary Disability/Delay Code
- Code is based on *Special Education Coding Criteria 2007/2008*.
- Ensure code entered in this column in the same code as that on the most recent pre-approval form from Special Programs Branch.

Program Start and End Dates
Accurately identify the dates that the particular child starts and ends programming. This may not be the start and end date for the ECS program in which the child is registered.

Centre-Based Programming Hours
Centre-based programming refers to the instructional program hours, determined by the child's assessed educational needs that are addressed through the development and delivery of an IPP. Flexibility within an ECS special education program allows for centre-based programming to be delivered in a school or community setting or in the child's home. Regardless of the site, Alberta Education expects a certificated teacher to be directly involved with centre-based programming hours. Programming must occur between September 1 and June 30.

When planning centre-based programming for a child, ECS operators should ensure the number of programming hours does not exceed what is required for the child's developmental needs.
- For funding purposes, a full-time program must provide 800 hours of instructional programming.
- 800 hours of centre-based programming is an option that may be considered only for a child in the year prior to entering Grade 1.
- In general, young children (3 or 4 year-olds) require fewer hours of programming, and their educational needs are appropriately met in a 475-hour program. Careful consideration should be given to matching the number of hours of programming to the age and needs of the child and family preferences.

Note
- Provision of extensive hours of programming (beyond what would normally be considered developmentally appropriate for a young child) should be discussed with a Special Programs Branch manager prior to the submission of an application.
- Centre-based programming may be combined with family-oriented programming sessions to provide a comprehensive program.

Instructional programming does not include:
- teachers' convention
- professional development days
- teacher planning days

- staff meetings
- statutory and school authority-declared holidays
- lunch breaks
- recesses
- time taken for the registration of children
- transportation.

Family-Oriented Programming

Family-oriented programming is individually planned, developmentally appropriate intervention for children with severe disabilities/delays and their families. It is designed to engage the child's parent(s) in a process that helps them to implement the goals and objectives of the IPP within the home and community environment. Family-oriented programming is done under the direction of a certificated teacher, takes place outside of centre-based programming hours, and is based on a 1:1 service delivery model.

Family-oriented programming is intended to enhance the child's centre-based programming as outlined in his or her IPP.

Note

Family-oriented programming is optional and whether or not it occurs should be a decision based on need, resources and parental preference.

To claim family-oriented programming for funding purposes, the following conditions must apply.

- Sessions average 1.5 hours, with no session shorter than 45 minutes.
- A written plan is developed for each session.
- Programming is under the direction of the certificated teacher.
- In the exceptional circumstance that the session is with the alternate caregiver, provision is made for sharing information with the parent.
- A minimum of 4 sessions is provided.
- Programming occurs outside of time claimed under centre-based hours.
- Family-oriented programming is an additional cost to the school authority.

Defining Family-Oriented Programming: What Counts and What Doesn't

The following are examples of what would constitute a family-oriented programming session.

- Teacher provides family-oriented programming in the child's home for 1.5 hours.
- Teacher or speech-language pathologist (under the direction of the teacher) provides two 45-minute sessions to two children and their parents or alternate caregivers at the school outside of time already claimed as centre-based programming.
- Occupational therapist, under the direction of the teacher, provides family-oriented programming to a child and his or her parents for 1.5 hours in the child's home.
- In-home consultant models intervention with the child and explains behaviour management strategies to daycare staff for 1.5 hours.

- Family liaison worker accompanies parent and child to grocery store for 1.5 hours and demonstrates strategies for incidental teaching of social and early academic skills included in the child's IPP.
- Members of the child's learning team and/or medical personnel and/or psychologists consult outside the centre for a minimum of 45 minutes (counts as .5 session). A school authority cannot claim more than the equivalent of one full session for child-centred consultation.

The following are examples of what would **not** constitute a family-oriented programming session:

- informal parent contact or contact that is typically required as a component of school-based special education programming (e.g., IPP meetings, concerts, classroom parties)
- contact with parents or alternate caregivers occurring during the time that is already claimed under centre-based hours
- time involved in travel to and from child's home or childcare centre
- therapies that are not directly related to the goals on the child's IPP
- informal visits to the home
- informal contact by school personnel
- telephone calls.

Note

The number, setting and structure of sessions must be determined in consultation with the parents prior to the implementation of the program. All sessions must be carefully planned and documented, as part of the child's program. Questions regarding criteria associated with sessions should be directed to a Special Programs Branch manager.

Combination Programs

An ECS program for a child may consist of a combination of centre-based and family-oriented programming (e.g., 475 centre-based programming hours and 10 family-oriented programming sessions). Combination programs may be particularly effective for very young children who require extensive programming.

Funding Ceiling

A funding ceiling is established by the number of programming hours provided. The figures in the chart below represent maximum ceilings only.

Funding Ceiling Based on a Full-Time Program (800 hours or equivalent)	
Number of Children Enrolled in Program Unit	**2007/2008 Program Unit Rates**
1	$23,262
2	$29,033
3	$34,804
each additional child	$ 5,771

A funding ceiling is calculated for each program unit. For program units that are less than full-time, the funding ceiling is prorated based on the number of centre-

based hours, family-oriented programming sessions, and months that the child is in the program. For example:

- The ceiling for a 500-hour program with one child is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{500}{800} \times \$23,262 = \$14,539$$

- The ceiling for a 400-hour program with 9 family-oriented programming sessions is calculated as follows:

$$\left(\frac{400}{800} + \frac{9}{36}\right) \times \$23,262 = \$17,447$$

- The ceiling for a 6-month program, if the child is in a full program ending on June 30, is:

$$\frac{6}{10} \times \$23,262 = \$13,957$$

When a child leaves a program before the specified end date, PUF Application Adjustment Form (Form 07AE2.3b), found in the *Funding Manual for School Authorities for 2007/2008 School Year,* must be submitted to School Finance Branch (Fax: 780-427-2147) within 30 days of the child's final day of attendance. The original approved budget total and ceiling will then be reduced.

Page 5: Program Unit Funding Budget

All school authorities must submit a PUF budget as part of the application process. The budget is developed taking into consideration the needs of all eligible children receiving programming in the school authority. A ceiling is established based on the number of centre-based program hours and/or family-oriented programming sessions reported on the Details Page.

Beginning in the 2007/2008 school year, all school authorities will submit their PUF application and budget using a revised process that began as a pilot during the 2004/2005 school year. This process allows school authorities greater flexibility in planning and providing service and supports for children with severe disabilities/delays.

The PUF budget form varies slightly depending on the designation of the ECS operator.

- Budget for Designated Special Education ECS Operators Only (Private)
- Budget for Private ECS Operators Only (non-Designated ECS Programs)
- Budget for School Jurisdictions Approved for the PUF Pilot
- Budget for Designated Special Education ECS Operators Only (Edmonton Public)

Operators using PUFS will see only the budget page applicable to their program. Operators using a paper application (only permissible for those with fewer than 10 children) must ensure they have selected the correct budget form.

School authorities are required to attach a report identifying the breakdown of costs in each budget category.

Budget Categories

Instructional Costs

Instructional Salaries and Wages
Includes salaries/wages for teacher assistants who are directly involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PUF child's program. Grouping of children for instruction, service and support should be considered as an alternative to full-time, direct one-to-one assistance.

The ECS teacher's salary is not included as part of program unit cost. ECS Base Instruction funding is provided to support the cost of hiring a certificated teacher. Supplementary instructional costs (a portion of teacher salary) may be included for designated special education ECS programs and/or congregated special education ECS programs within school jurisdictions. (For an explanation of *congregated programs*, please contact a Special Programs Branch manager.) In these cases, school authorities must declare Base Instruction funding received for all children in the designated or congregated programs on the PUF application.

Special education consultation may be claimed in this section. Special education consultation is a service purchased by the school authority to provide special programming support for the regular ECS classroom teacher. Examples of services provided under special education consultation include assistance with IPP development, monitoring and evaluation, provision of programming strategies, suggestions for resources and materials, and support of off-site program components. Special education consultation must be delivered by a certificated teacher with appropriate training and experience. Special education consultation costs are additional costs to the school authority to provide direct programming support in the regular ECS environment.

Employer's Portion of Fringe Benefits
Includes the employer's portion of benefits for teacher assistants, teachers and special education consultants who are employees of the school authority.

Specialized Services and Supports
Includes services of qualified professionals in the areas of speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, orientation and mobility, psychological and other services, and assessments that are not provided free by public service agencies. All options regarding service delivery should be considered. Services and supports must be relevant to the child's educational

program and in direct support of the educational goals and objectives included on the child's IPP.

Play school or pre-school fees may sometimes be claimed as an eligible PUF expense under Services and Supports. School authorities may occasionally need to contract placement in a daycare setting for delivery of the child's educational program. If educational programming is provided in a pre-school or daycare setting, the school authority must ensure that:

- placement in the pre-school/daycare is the best available option for the child's educational program,
- the child was not previously placed in the pre-school/daycare by the parent,
- daycare fees are only claimed for that portion of the day required for the educational component of the child's program, and
- costs for child care are not included on the PUF budget.

Supplies and Materials
Includes supplies and materials that are specific to the child's program and are in addition to supplies purchased with Base Instruction funding. Costs in this category are usually in the $200–$500 range per child. School authorities are encouraged to maintain a resource inventory and an equipment loan pool.

Parent Inservice

Includes costs for parents to attend in-province workshops, seminars, inservice and specialized training sessions specifically related to the child's program and designed to enhance the ability of the parent to facilitate the child's development. Costs in this category are usually in the $100–$400 range per child. School authorities are encouraged to pool parent inservice resources and use expertise available in the school authority and/or community to provide inservice opportunities for groups of parents who may need similar information or strategies.

Staff Inservice

Includes costs for program staff to attend workshops, inservices, special courses and seminars related to their responsibilities in the child's educational program. Costs in this category are usually in the $200–$500 range per child. Personnel who are not employees of the school authority are not eligible for staff inservice.

Transportation Costs

Details regarding funding to school authorities for transportation of PUF children are available in the *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2007-2008 School Year*.

Transportation costs for PUF children not covered by this transportation funding can be claimed as a PUF expense. To determine the transportation costs that may be covered by PUF, all transportation costs must be indicated on the PUF

budget form or on the attachment (depending on the budget form used) and all transportation revenues must be deducted from the transportation costs.

Transportation costs may be claimed for:

- transportation to and from school,
- transportation for family-oriented programming sessions,
- field trips provided in addition to field trips for the regular ECS class or for a PUF child who, because of his/her disability/delay, requires special transportation on a regularly scheduled field trip, and
- in-program transportation of a PUF child from the school/centre program to another program or service as part of the PUF child's IPP.

Note

Transportation claims must be submitted electronically to the Financial Reporting and Accountability Branch by November 30. Only PUF children enrolled by the count date are eligible for transportation funding.

Facility Costs

Funding allocations for facilities differ for school jurisdictions and for private ECS operators. Therefore, claims for facility costs allowed on the PUF budget also differ depending on the type of school authority.

For Private Designated Special Education ECS Programs, this includes costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the school facility, including rental costs. Operation and maintenance that exceeds the funding provided under Section 2.6 of the *Funding Manual for School Authorities* may be claimed as PUF costs on the budget page.

For school jurisdictions—including jurisdictions with congregated and Designated Special Education ECS programs—renovations to and maintenance of a building to be used for the benefit of all PUF children are not eligible for funding support under this section. Alberta Education provides Plant Operation and Maintenance funding as well as Infrastructure, Maintenance and Renewal funding to cover these types of costs.

Program Coordination Costs

Includes costs for the coordination of ECS programming and some reasonable administration costs. School jurisdictions are advised that costs for school administration are not eligible under this cost category. Funding for administration is included in the ECS Base Instruction funding.

Designated Special Education ECS Programs may claim reasonable administration costs (typically in the 6%–12% range). ECS Administration funding revenues must be included on the application.

Specialized Equipment and Furniture

Includes expenditures for specialized equipment and furniture that are required to meet the special education needs of a PUF child and/or a group of PUF children. School authorities are advised to be aware of current information regarding provision of adaptive or augmentative devices by other agencies and to seek funding from these sources first. Special Programs Branch managers are available to provide assistance and advice in this area.

School authorities should keep on file a written recommendation from an appropriate specialist indicating the need for specialized equipment. This recommendation should specify the relevance of the equipment to the child/children's education program, how it directly supports the goals and objectives of the IPP, and projected costs of the equipment. These costs should be reasonable and based on more than one price quote.

If a PUF child changes schools in Alberta and continues to have use for the specialized equipment or furniture specifically purchased for that child, the equipment or furniture goes with the PUF child. If a specialized piece of furniture is no longer required by the child, it becomes the property of the school authority, not of the PUF child or the parents of the PUF child.

For Designated Special Education ECS programs and congregated special education ECS programs, Alberta Education will apply all appropriate revenues to the total program costs (e.g., ECS Base Instruction funding, Mild/Moderate funding, ECS Transportation funding and other applicable revenues) to determine a net program cost total to which program unit funding will apply.

Questions related to the preparation of budgets should be addressed to the appropriate Special Programs Branch manager.

Other Considerations

- The final date for submitting Program Unit Funding applications is December 21, 2007.
- ECS operators should plan and budget carefully.
- The final PUF amount paid will be the least of the program unit ceiling, approved budget amount, or actual costs.
- PUF is available for each eligible child with a severe disability/delay for a maximum of three years. Partial years are considered part of the three years; e.g., a two-month program in 2007/2008 represents one year of funding.
- A maximum of 800 hours of centre-based programming or a combination of centre-based hours and family-oriented programming sessions will be funded.
- Applications for children who are diagnosed or registered after December 21 will be accepted until April 1, 2008.

Designated Special Education ECS Programs

- Where at least 70% of the ECS children served have severe disabilities/delays, Designated Special Education ECS programs may include program costs in their Program Unit budget (except capital building costs and other fixed costs that would still be incurred if the program did not operate).
- Other revenues, such as Base Instruction and Transportation funding, will be applied to the program costs.

Note

- Alberta Education is not accepting new applications for Designated Special Education ECS programs.

School Jurisdictions

- Payments to school jurisdictions are distributed on a monthly basis at 8.33% a month with the exception of January and August, which are at 8.35%.

Private ECS Operators

- For private ECS operators, the PUF payment schedule is:
  - upon receipt of PUF application (70%, less any previous amount)
  - April (80%, less previous payment)
  - June (90%, less previous payment)
  - upon approval of final costs (100%, less previous payments).

  Note: With the approval of the Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Services, a March payment may be made up to 90%, less previous payment.
- Payments to private ECS operators will be received in the last week of the month, based on electronic deposit.

ECS Transportation Funding

Regular ECS Transportation

ECS Transportation funding is provided for a child who can be transported by conventional means; i.e., school bus, public transit or a parent. Regular ECS Transportation funding is provided at $499 per eligible transported child. This funding is claimed on the ECS Transportation application form. For further details, refer to the *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2007/2008 School Year*, Section 1.19 (rural) and Section 1.20 (urban) for school jurisdictions, and Section 2.4 for private ECS operators.

Special Transportation

Funding for transportation to and from school is provided for a child who requires special transportation (e.g., handi-bus) because the severity of the child's disability/delay or the child's age prevents the child from using regular rural or urban transportation.

For 2007/2008, Special Transportation funding is provided at $14.34 for each round trip. This funding is claimed on the ECS transportation application form and deducted as revenue from the cost of transportation submitted on the PUF application. PUF can cover transportation costs that exceed the Special Transportation funding.

New

Special Transportation funding is not provided when a parent transports their own child. Regular transportation funding is available. Local policies will determine the funding rate that will be provided to parents.

Private ECS operators receive the Special Transportation funding application form electronically and return it electronically (by November 30) to School Reporting Branch.

Family-Oriented Programming Transportation

Transportation funding is provided for each scheduled family-oriented programming session that is conducted by a teacher, therapist, child development specialist or educational assistant in the home of a child enrolled in an ECS program. A minimum of four family-oriented programming sessions must be scheduled in order to claim transportation funding.

- For 2007/2008, family-oriented programming transportation funding is paid for a maximum of 36 sessions at $14.34 for each round trip.
- The amount of $14.34 can be claimed for each round trip, regardless of the actual cost of the trip. For example, a round-trip may cost $5.00 but the school authority will claim the full amount of $14.34 for each family-oriented programming session to a maximum of 36 sessions.
- Local policies will determine the transportation rate that will be provided to the person conducting the family-oriented programming session, keeping in mind

that even if the service provider provides more than 36 sessions, the maximum amount the school authority can claim is $516.24 (36 sessions x $14.34).
- Funding is claimed on the ECS transportation application form and deducted as revenue from the cost of transportation on the PUF application.
- PUF covers transportation costs that exceed the family-oriented programming transportation funding.

Note: Transportation funding is not available for children whose programming starts after September 30. Children who are identified as eligible for PUF after September 30 may have their transportation costs claimed as an expense under PUF. For further details on Special Transportation funding, refer to the *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2007/2008 School Year*, Section 1.21 for school jurisdictions and Section 2.5 for private ECS operators.

Field Trips and In-Program Transportation

Transportation costs incurred for field trips or other activities can be claimed as part of transportation costs under PUF. Field trips claimed must be those trips provided in addition to field trips for the regular ECS class. In-program transportation costs must be specified. In-program transportation includes transportation of the child from one program to another program or agency as part of the child's IPP.

Reporting of Actual Costs

At the end of the school year, school authorities must report total actual PUF expenditures in the following manner.
- Private ECS operators report to School Reporting Branch, Manager of Transportation, on Schedule 3 of the Audited Financial Statements by November 30, 2007.
- School jurisdictions report on the ECS Program Unit Funding Summary of Actual Expenditures form provided in the *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2007/2008 School Year* by October 31, 2007.

Other ECS Funding

Base Instruction Funding

Base Instruction funding is paid on behalf of all eligible ECS children registered September 30 in an approved ECS program. It supports day-to-day operating costs including the provision of a certificated teacher, an approved facility, appropriate equipment and materials, and an administrative support structure. For 2007/2008, funding is provided at $2,725 for each child. For additional information, refer to the *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2007/2008 School Year*, Section 1.1 for school jurisdictions and Section 2.1 for private ECS operators.

Base Instruction funding may only be claimed by one school authority per year.

Funding for Children with Mild to Moderate Disabilities/Delays and Those Who Are Gifted and Talented

Funding for children with mild to moderate disabilities/delays and those who are gifted and talented is provided in addition to the Base Instruction funding. Identified children must be at least 3 years, 6 months of age and less than 6 years of age on September 1. To receive this funding, a school authority must ensure a child is properly identified in the Student Information System (SIS) as having a mild to moderate disability/delay or as gifted and talented according to *Special Education Coding Criteria 2007/2008*. Supporting documentation and an IPP are required for each child. For 2007/2008, funding of $2,308 is provided for each eligible child. Please refer to the *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2007/2008 School Year* for additional information on funding for children with mild to moderate disabilities/delays and those who are gifted and talented.

New

A second enrollment count can be taken on March 3 for **funded children with mild to moderate disabilities/delays** and children who are gifted and talented who are between 3 years and 6 months and 4 years and 6 months old on September 1. The March 3 count provides 50% funding for in-year enrollment growth of these children. This count must be submitted by March 6.

Appendix A
Local Special Education Needs Policies and Procedures

Accountability for programming for ECS children with special education needs is established through school authority policies and procedures. School authorities must ensure that written local policies and procedures are developed, kept current and implemented. The local policies and procedures must provide for access, appropriateness, accountability and appeals, and they must be available to the public in print or electronic form. The checklist below may be useful as you develop your policies. For more information, refer to *Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education*.

Checklist

Do we have written policies and procedures related to the following areas?

- ☐ early identification, referral and assessment of ECS children with special education needs
- ☐ collaboration with referral agencies to determine eligibility and programming needs
- ☐ ensuring ongoing informed consent for referral, specialized assessment and eligibility
- ☐ identifying and referring children who require specialized assessment
- ☐ accessing coordinated services
- ☐ accessing and recording medical information
- ☐ storing and/or administering medications
- ☐ training for staff who administer health-related support services
- ☐ roles and responsibilities of staff who provide programming to children with special education needs
- ☐ staff professional development directly related to the needs of children with whom they are working
- ☐ individualized program development and implementation
- ☐ family-orientated programming sessions
- ☐ program monitoring and evaluation as outlined on p. 17 of *Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education*
- ☐ providing ongoing educational programming information to parents
- ☐ transition of ECS children with special education needs to the resident school board or program of choice
- ☐ dispute resolution and appeal processes
- ☐ transportation

Appendix B
Applicable Sections of *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2007/2008*

School Jurisdictions

Section 1.1	ECS Base Instruction Funding
Section 1.5	ECS Mild to Moderate Disabilities/Delays and Gifted and Talented Funding
Section 1.6	ECS Program Unit Funding
Section 1.19	Rural Transportation Funding
Section 1.20	Urban Transportation Funding
Section 1.21	Special Transportation Funding

Private ECS Operators

Section 2.1	ECS Base Instruction Funding
Section 2.2	ECS Mild to Moderate Disabilities/Delays and Gifted and Talented Funding
Section 2.3	ECS Program Unit Funding
Section 2.4	ECS Regular Transportation Funding
Section 2.5	ECS Special Transportation Funding

Glossary of Terms

Appendix C
Forms Available in the *Funding Manual for School Authorities 2007/2008*

- 2007/2008 Program Unit Funding Application (07AE2.3a)
- ECS PUF Statement of Actual Expenditures for School Jurisdictions (07AE1.6)
- PUF Application Adjustments Form (07AE2.3b)

References

Alberta Education. ***Funding Manual for School Authorities 2007/2008 School Year.*** **Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 2007.**
Available from www.education.gov.ab.ca/funding

Alberta Education. ***Kindergarten Guide to Implementation: Sharing Visions, Sharing Voices.*** **Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 2000.**
Purchase from the Learning Resources Centre www.lrc.education.gov.ab.ca
Telephone: (780) 427–2767 (toll free in Alberta by dialing 310–0000)
Fax: (780) 422–9750.

Alberta Education. ***Kindergarten Program Statement (September 2005).*** **Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.**
Available from www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/kinder.asp

Alberta Education. ***K–12 Learning System Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual.*** **Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.**
Available from www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationguide/pol-plan.

Alberta Education. ***Special Education Coding Criteria 2007/2008.*** **Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 2007**
Available from www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds

Alberta Education. ***Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education.*** **Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 2006**
Available from www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds
Also available from Special Programs Branch.
Telephone: (780) 422–6326 (toll free in Alberta by dialing 310–0000)

School Act. **Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter S-3 with amendments in force as of October 1, 2005.**
Available from the Queen's Printer at www.qp.gov.ab.ca
Telephone: (780) 427–4952 (toll free in Alberta by dialing 310–0000).